

STAN LEE Presents:

HOWARD the DUCK?

Volume 1 No. 2 December 1979

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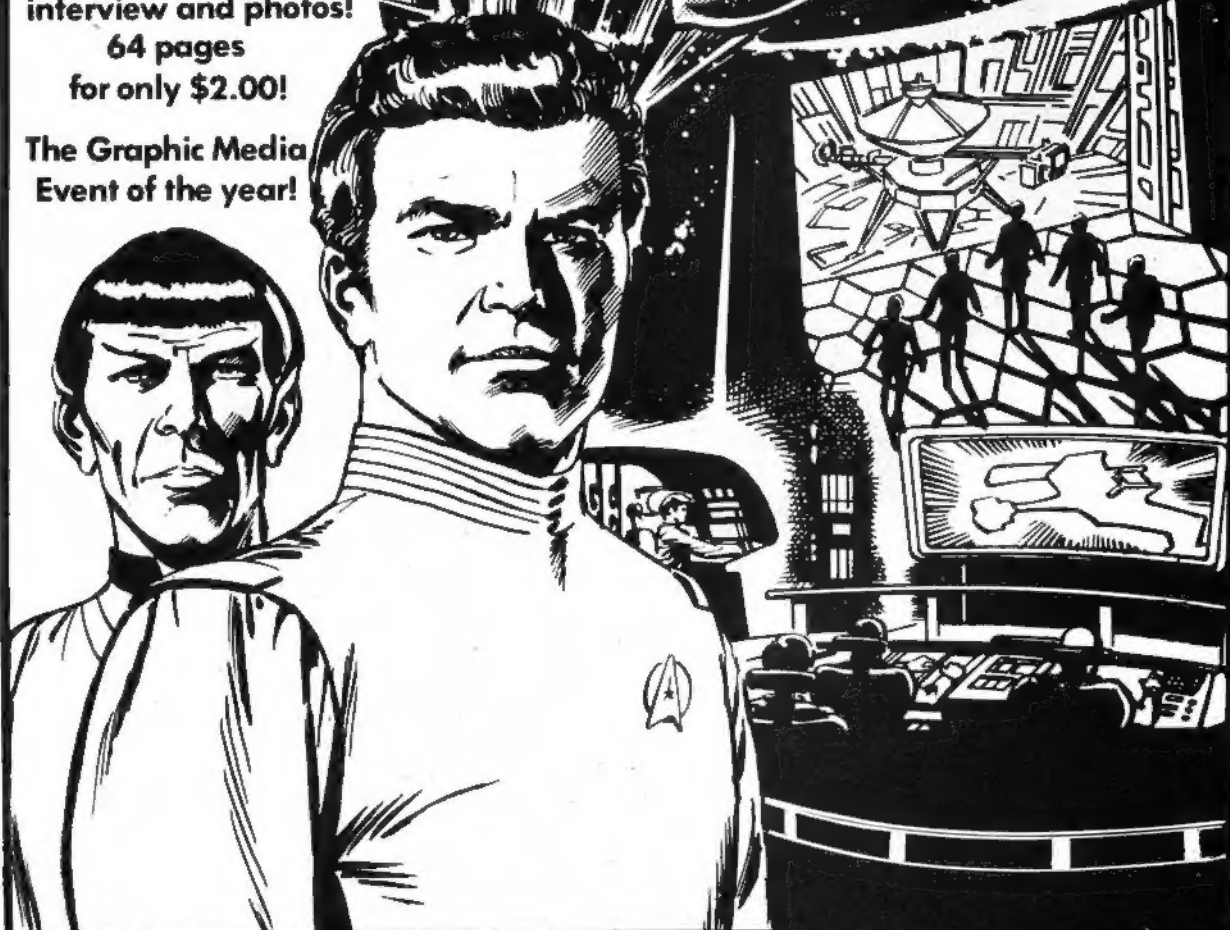
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with delusions
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HOWARD the DUCK?

TRAPPED IN A WORLD HE NEVER MADE!

ALL NEW!

See Howard
battle the
forces of evil
thru the power
of massive
mediocrity!

*

A FIGHT TO
THE FINISH--
OR AT LEAST
THE HALF-WAY
MARK--IN THE
DREAD REALM
OF THE DIGITAL
DIMENSION!

*

ALSO:

A web-footed
review of
HOWARD's
spotted past!

*



ALSO:
Putting the pants
on HOWARD!

WARNING: THE SURGEON-GENERAL HAS DE-
TERMINED THAT NOT BUYING THIS BOOK
MAY BE DANGEROUS TO YOUR HEALTH.





HELLO, MY NAME IS WALLY SIDNEY-- YOU DON'T KNOW ME, BUT I'VE BEEN WATCHING OUT FOR YOUR WELFARE NONETHELESS. MAYBE YOU'LL GET THE PICTURE IF I TELL YOU ABOUT A SITUATION WE HERE IN CLEVELAND FACED JUST RECENTLY, AND DESCRIBE HOW A CONCERNED CITIZENRY UNDERSTOOD ITS RESPONSIBILITIES AND RALLIED TO DEAL WITH THE SERIOUS AND OFTEN UNDERESTIMATED PROBLEM OF...

ANIMAL INDECENCY!

THE FIRST INDICATION THAT PUBLIC OUTRAGE HAD REACHED THE BOILING POINT CAME ONE OCTOBER DAY INSIDE THE ARCADE, A FAMOUS CLEVELAND SHOPPING CENTER.

HOWARD, LOOK! WHY DO YOU THINK ALL THOSE PEOPLE ARE PICKETING A PET STORE?

SHAME, SHAME!

STAMP OUT PET PERVERSITY!

DRAPE YOUR DOGS!

PRETTY KITTY PET STORE

PRESERVE DECENCY-- HIDE YOUR PET'S PRIVATES!

COVER YOUR CATS!

SHIELD HUMANS FROM ANIMAL LUST!

ILLEGALIZE PET PORNO!

ET CETERA!

MAYBE THEY BOUGHT PUPPIES ON A SIX-MONTH WARRANTEE AND THE OWNER WON'T TAKE 'EM BACK NOW THAT THEY'RE GREAT DANES!

"THE 'DEMONSTRATION FOR DECENCY' WAS WELL UNDERWAY BY THE TIME THE DUCK ARRIVED..."

HEY, LADY! WHAT GIVES? SOMEBODY FIND OUT THIS PET STORE KILLS WHALES ON THE SIDE?

INDEED NOT! WE ARE HERE TO PROTEST THE CONTINUED INDECENCY THAT ALLOWS ANIMALS TO APPEAR UNCLOTHED IN PUBLIC! WE--

--MY WORD! YOU-YOU'RE A DUCK, AREN'T YOU?



"THAT IS HOW I FIRST CAME TO SET EYES ON THE DUCK, THE SUDDEN SILENCE ON THE PART OF THE PROTESTERS DRAWING ME TO THE WINDOW OF MY CLOTHING STORE IN THE ARCADE."

AH! A TEST OF THE DECENCY COMMITTEE'S RESOLVE IF EVER THERE WAS ONE!



"I WAS NOT YET READY TO INTERVENE IN PERSON... SO I MERELY WATCHED...AND WAITED."

GIVE IN TO THESE BOZOS? WHY, LADY? WHAT IS IT THEY WANT FROM YA?

SOB! DECENCY! THEIR WARPED IDEA OF IT, ANYWAY! YOU KNOW THEIR TYPE! FIRST THEY LEGISLATE THE KIND OF CLOTHING PEOPLE MUST WEAR...



SHIRLEY'S FAINTED! WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

A NAKED DUCK?!? :EEEEEEEEEE!

LOOK! A DUCK!

HOWARD, WHAT DID YOU DO?

UNDRAPE! SCANDALOUS! IT-IT TALKS!

SHORT OF EXISTING, TOOTS? SEARCH ME!



LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT...

I'LL TELL YOU! THESE PEOPLE ARE SICK, BUT I CAN'T FIGHT THEM ANYMORE! THEIR BOYCOTT HAS HURT MY SALES! I-I'VE GOT TO GIVE IN!



...THEN THEY PASS LAWS, IN THE NAME OF THE PUBLIC DECENCY, DEMANDING THAT PETS BE PANOPIED AS WELL!





"IN A MOMENT, THE 'DEMONSTRATION FOR DECENCY' HAS BECOME A FULL-BLOWN RIOT! THE SHAMELESS DUCK, REPRESENTING THE FORCES OF IMMODESTY, GAVE AN EXCELLENT ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF--TEACHING THOSE WHOSE COMMITMENT TO DECENCY WAS WEAK, THAT PURITY IS NOT WON WITHOUT A PRICE!"



HOWARD!?!

WAAUGHH!

SMASH!
TRASH!
MASH!

SLASH!
KILL!



HOLD ON, DUCKY!
I'M COMING!

SLUT!
NO
NEED
TO
BRAG
ABOUT
IT!
MMMPHHH!

OH,
SHUT UP,
YOU
WRINKLED
OLD
SOW!

SWAP!

DUCKY, DID YOU
EVER HEAR OF
CONTAINING
YOUR ANGER?

CONTAIN IT AN'
THE PRESSURE
BUILDS UP AN'
BLOWS YER HEAD
OFF, TOOTS!
BESIDES, THEY
DIDN'T CONTAIN
THEIRS!



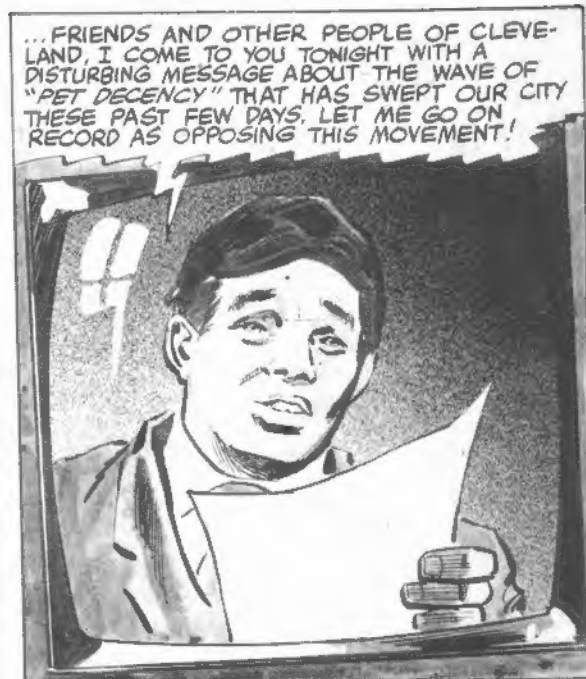
LEMME
AT 'EM!

"ELUDING THE MOB--ER,
CROWD--THE DUCK AND
HIS HUMAN COMPANION
HID IN THE DOORWAY
OF SILVERMAN'S
T.V. CITY."

I THINK WE
LOST THEM,
DUCKY!

I'D
LIKE TO
LOSE 'EM--
AT SEA! DO
YOU KNOW
WHAT THEY
WERE TRYIN'
TO DO TO
ME BACK
THERE,
BEV?





"DESPITE THE MAYOR'S PEURILE PLEA, THE DESIGNS OF DECENCY COULD NOT BE THWARTED. DISCOVERED, THE DUCK AND BEVERLY FLED AGAIN."





IT WAS 1919, THE "WAR TO END ALL WARS" WAS OVER, AND LIKE THOUSANDS OF OTHER DOUGH-BOYS, I WAS HOME AND LOOKING FOR A JOB

BUT UNLIKE THOSE COUNTLESS OTHERS, I POSSESSED A TALENT FOR DRAWING THAT I FELT WOULD MAKE ME MILLIONS IN THE BURGEONING GREETING CARD BUSINESS

THIS IS MY LATEST CREATION, MR. DIRECTOR, SIR! A RAT! HE WEARS CLOTHES, AND HE'D BE JUST THE THING FOR MERCHANDISING OR TALKING PICTURES. I CALL HIM HYMIE.

A RAT THAT WEARS CLOTHES AND TALKS? KID THAT'S THE STUPIDEST THING I EVER HEARD

THE SLAM OF THAT DOOR WAS THE MOST DIS- COURAGING THING I'D EVER HEARD

I LEFT THE STUDIO JITTERLY DEJECTED

I-I'D PINNED ALL MY HOPES ON HYMIE! THERE'S NOTHING LEFT! EVERY DOOR'S CLOSED TO...

CLOSED? CLOTHED? WAIT! THAT'S IT! MAYBE I CAN'T DRAW TALKING RATS VERY WELL, BUT I'M SURE I CAN DESIGN CLOTHES!

IT WAS A MOMENT OF DIVINE INSPIRATION!

"SO I OPENED MY FIRST SHOP IN BURBANK, CALIFORNIA CLOTHING THE RICH AND CONSERVATIVE!"

NO, TOO FLASHY! TRY THE GRAY FLANNEL!

YES UNCLE!

"MY CLOTHING ESTABLISHMENTS BOOMED, SPREADING ACROSS THE COUNTRY INTO EVERY CITY, TOWN AND MALL! PEOPLE FLOCKED TO SHOP AT **SIDNEY LAND!**"

"MY NAME SOON BECAME A NATIONAL INSTITUTION! SIDNEY DESIGNS WERE BORNE ALOFT DURING THE HABERDASHERY DAY PARADE--"

"-- AND MOVIE THEATERS EVERY- WHERE SHOWED MY FEATURE FASHION FILM, **PANTASY!**"

SIDNEY LAND

PANTASY

CUTE STORY-- BUT WHAT'S YOUR AUTOBIOGRAPHY GOT TO DO WITH US?

EVERYTHING, HOWARD.



YOU SEE, I WAS ON TOP OF THE WORLD AS LONG AS THE WORLD WANTED GREY FLANNEL SUITS. BUT THEN CAME THE 60'S! BEADS! BELL-BOTTOMS! CRAZE FOLLOWED CRAZE! IT WAS AN ERA OF STYLISTIC PERMISSIVENESS!

FOR AWHILE AFTER NIXON'S ELECTION, IT LOOKED LIKE THERE MIGHT BE A RESURGENCE OF CONSERVATISM, BUT THEN CAME WATERGATE! AND, IN THE "ME DECADE"-- THE 70'S-- EVEN RELATIVELY NORMAL PEOPLE BEGAN TO EXPERIMENT WITH FASHION!

SALES DROPPED! MY STORES BEGAN TO CLOSE! MY FASHION FILMS FAILED TO ATTRACT AUDIENCES! I FACED RUINATION!



SOB! SNIFF!



THEN I HIT ON THE SOLUTION, DUCK

HOWARD. I PREFER HOWARD



YES, HOWARD--THE GRAND ANSWER WHICH WOULD SAVE ME FROM BANKRUPTCY! IF PEOPLE NO LONGER WORE MY CLOTHES... THEN, ANIMALS WOULD!



WAAUGH! THEN YOU'RE THE ONE BEHIND THESE DEMONSTRATIONS FOR DECENCY, THIS LUNATIC DRIVE TO DRAPE DUCKS!

"NOT JUST DUCKS, HOWARD! ALL ANIMALS, WILD AND DOMESTICATED! THINK OF THE PROFITS, HOWARD! THINK OF THE SUDDEN INFLOWING OF RICHES IF EVERYONE IN AMERICA WERE FORCED TO DRESS THEIR LIVESTOCK! AND ONLY **SIDNEY LAND** WILL HAVE THE DESIGNS ALREADY IN PRODUCTION FOR DRAPING DOGS, COVERING CATS... AND DRESSING DUCKS!"



"ALL I NEED IS ONE VICTORY, HOWARD! IF I CAN GET YOU TO WALK OUT OF MY SHOP WITH YOUR NAKEDNESS HIDDEN BENEATH A SIDNEY DESIGN, THEN THERE IS NOT AN ANIMAL IN THE WORLD THAT WILL LONG REMAINED UNCLOTHED!"

NO, HOWARD? HAVE YOU SO SOON FORGOTTEN THAT BLOODTHIRSTY MOB HOWLING FOR YOUR PINFEATHERS OUTSIDE MY SHOP?!



YOU'RE INSANE! THERE AIN'T NO WAY THIS SIDE OF THE COSMIC AXIS YOU'RE GONNA GET THIS MALLARD TO PUT ON PANTS!!



AN' IF I REFUSE TA COVER UP?

THEN HOWARD, I SHALL LET THEM IN.

OH, DUCKY, THIS IS TERRIBLE! WITHOUT YOUR CUTE, FLUFFY LITTLE TAILFEATHERS PEAKING OUT FROM UNDER YOUR JACKET YOU-YOU'LL LOSE YOUR DUCKNESS!

I KNOW IT, TOOTS, BUT WE AIN'T GOT MUCH CHOICE!



I-IT'S SLACKS OR SUICIDE, BEV!

AWRIGHT, CLUCK, YOU WIN! BUT I'M WARNIN' YA--THE WHOLE WORLD IS GONNA KNOW THAT WALLY SIDNEY MADE ME DO IT!



IT IS ONE OF THE PRIVILEGES OF POWER, NOT TO BE AFRAID OF TAKING CREDIT FOR ONE'S DASTARDLY DEEDS

"NO SOONER HAD THE FALLEN FOWL STEPPED BEHIND THE DRESSING ROOM SCREEN, THAN..."

WAAUGHH!!

H-HOWARD?! Y-YOU MONSTER, WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO MY DUCKY???



MERELY MORTIFIED HIM, MY DEAR MS. SWITZLER...

...AS HE TRIES ON BUT
THE FIRST OF MY FOWL
COLLECTION!



PERHAPS THE
"SAILOR LOOK" IS
MORE YOUR STYLE,
HOWARD!



AN' WHADDA YA CALL
THIS HOT LITTLE
NUMBER?

A
DUCKSKIN
LEOTARD,
HOWARD
BUT LET'S
TRY
ANOTHER



AH, THE "SATURDAY NIGHT
FEVER" FASHION!

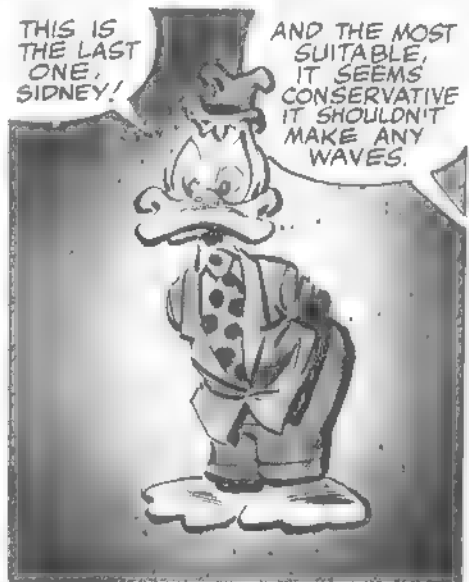


HERE'S MY FAVORITE!
A THROWBACK TO MY
"HYMIE THE RAT"
DAYS!



THIS IS
THE LAST
ONE,
SIDNEY!

AND THE MOST
SUITABLE,
IT SEEMS
CONSERVATIVE
IT SHOULDN'T
MAKE ANY
WAVES.



THEN GO FORTH INTO THE WORLD
WITH MY BLESSINGS, HOWARD
AND REMEMBER: "A DRESSED
DUCK FEELS NO SHAME!"



THE END?

Enter "an age undreamed of"...cross the threshold into the barbaric world of
CONAN THE CIMMERIAN!

Follow his lusty, brawling adventures in
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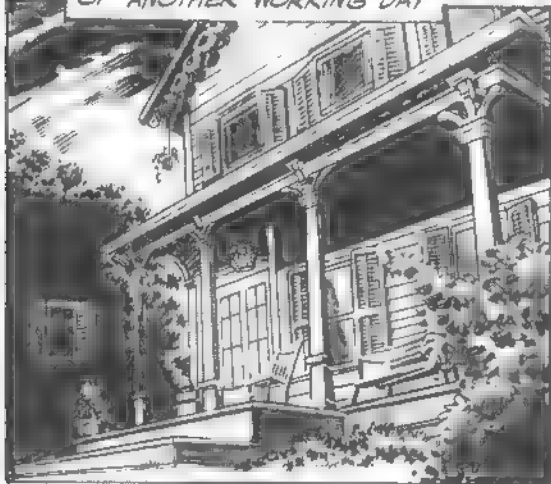


THE SAVAGE SWORD OF
CONAN
THE BARBARIAN

On sale monthly wherever sorcerous scrolls are sold!

THE CRASH of '79!

CLEVELAND IN THE COZY SUBURB OF BAY VILLAGE THE BIRDS SERENADE THE DAWNINGS OF ANOTHER WORKING DAY



IN MOST ORDINARY HOMES ALARM CLOCKS OBEY THE DICTATES OF THEIR DESIGNERS AND AWAKE FATHER TO CATCH HIS CAR-POOL MOTHER TO PREPARE BREAKFAST, AND ALICE AND JERRY FOR SCHOOL.

BUT YOU'RE NOT HERE TO READ ABOUT ORDINARY PEOPLE'S ORDINARY LIVES, ARE YOU?

NO, YOU WANT TO HEAR ABOUT HOWARD THE DUCK!

HMMM HOWARD WOULD YOU SHUT OFF THE ALARM, PLEASE?

WAAK??
'LARM? SURE, TOOTS,
I'LL SHUD THE 'LARM...



THE KILLER-CLOCK STRIKES!



I'VE BEEN A MAGNET FOR WEIRDOES EVER SINCE A SHIFT IN THE COSMIC AXIS DROPPED ME ON THIS WORLD! WHY? WHAT IS IT ABOUT ME THAT ANGRERS BELL-HEADED BOZOS, KIDNEY-BREATHED OLD BATS AND CHICKEN-SUITED CRETINS, JUST TO NAME A FEW?

AN' NOW I'M UNDER ATTACK BY A TENTACLED TIMEPIECE! WHOSE STROKE OF GENIUS WERE YOU, CLOCK? SOME DEMENTED SCRIPTWRITER SHORT ON IDEAS?



WELL, I WANT YOU TO CARRY A MESSAGE BACK TO YOUR CREATOR, CLOCK! TELL HIM I'M TIRED OF BEING MESSED WITH!

TELL HIM: DON'T DUMP ON THIS DUCK!



HOWARD, WAS THAT YOU?



CLICK

HOWARD??





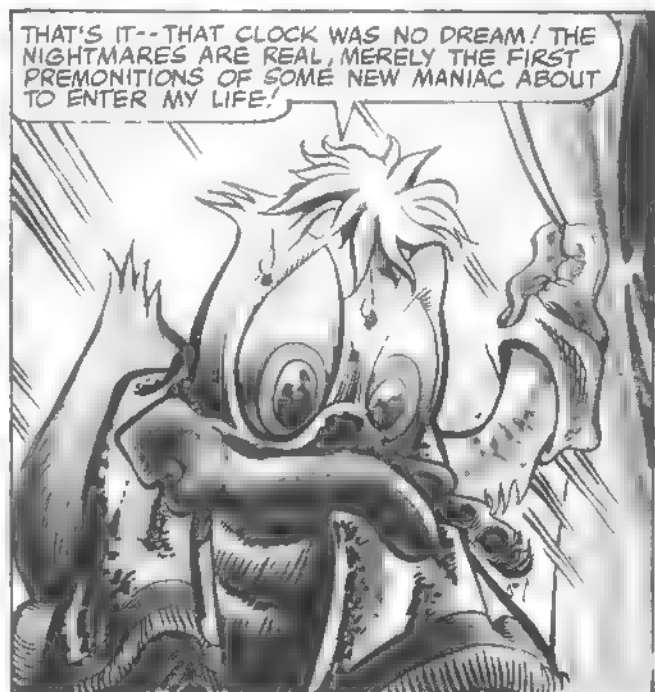
...UNTIL HE NOTICES THAT, CONTRARY TO EXPECTATION, HIS TASK SEEMS TO GET EASIER RATHER THAN HARDER WITH EACH REPEATED STROKE--AS IF HE WERE SCRUBBING AIR!



DOWN THE DRAIN? IMPOSSIBLE! OR IS IT? THIS MORNING I WOULD'VE SAID THE SAME THING ABOUT KILLER ALARM CLOCKS!



THAT'S IT--THAT CLOCK WAS NO DREAM! THE NIGHTMARES ARE REAL, MERELY THE FIRST PREMONITIONS OF SOME NEW MANIAC ABOUT TO ENTER MY LIFE!



AN' HE'S GOT BEV, NO DOUBT COUNTING ON MY LUST FOR HER TO--



HOWARD? I THOUGHT YOU HATED WATER!



YOU JUST DON'T WANT TO FACE THE TRUTH, DUCKY. THAT SCENE THIS MORNING, YOUR FREAK-OUT IN THE BATHROOM--OUR LIVES HAVE TAKEN A GIANT TURN FOR THE BETTER AND THAT SCARES YOU SPEECHLESS!

AWRIGHT, I'LL ADMIT YOU WORKIN' AS AN ARTIST. MODEL AN' ME DRIVIN' A CAB FOR YOUR UNCLE LEE HAS MADE ME ACCUSTOMED TO SECURITY--

--SO WHY ARE WE TAKIN' A GAMBLE ON LOSIN' IT BY STARRIN' IN DINO DIGITALIS' NEW LOW-BUDGET SCI FI FLICK? WE'RE JUST FOLKS, BEV-- NOT MOVIE STARS!



IT'S AN ADVENTURE, DUCKY! A STAB AT THE BRIGHT LIGHTS! A CHANCE TO WALK THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD!

HOLD THE MELODRAMA, KID. THIS IS CLEVELAND, NOT KANSAS.

YOU'RE NOT DOROTHY AN' I'M DEFINITELY NOT YOUR FAITHFUL LITTLE DOG, TOTO.

MR. DIGITALIS ISN'T MAKING THAT KIND OF MOVIE, HOWARD NOW EAT YOUR BREAK-FAST, HUH?



BEV, DO I GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT I'M IN-TO INFANTICIDE OR SOMETHING?

INFANT--?

I'LL GIVE YOU A HINT WHAT'S WHITE OVOID AND ALWAYS REMINDS ME OF MY BIRTHDAY?

GEE, I DON'T--? OH HOWARD. I'M SORRY I FORGOT YOU HAVE A THING ABOUT EATING--





THE STENCH OF SORCERY AND SIZZLING GRIDDLE-GREASE FERMEATES THE OLD RAILROAD TERMINAL, AND IN RESPONSE PRO RATA'S BREAKFAST LEAVES HIS PLATE AND DANCES IN THE STALE AIR .. CASTING HUGE OMINOUS SHADOWS ON THE CAVERNOUS WALLS!



MEANWHILE, BACK IN BAY VILLAGE...

MORNING, WINDA HOW ARE YOU AND PAUL GETTING ALONG?

SIMPWY MAWVE-WOUSWY BEVEWY!



IT WAS SO SWELL OF YOU TO AWWOW US TO WIVE IN THE DOWNSTAIRS HALF OF THE HOUSE TILL WE GET BACK ON OUR FEET

HMMM. IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE PAUL'S BEEN OFF HIS SINCE HE WAS RELEASED FROM SKUDGE HOSPITAL

I'M AFRAID HE'S STILL IN A COMA I FEEL SO SOWWY FOR HIM.

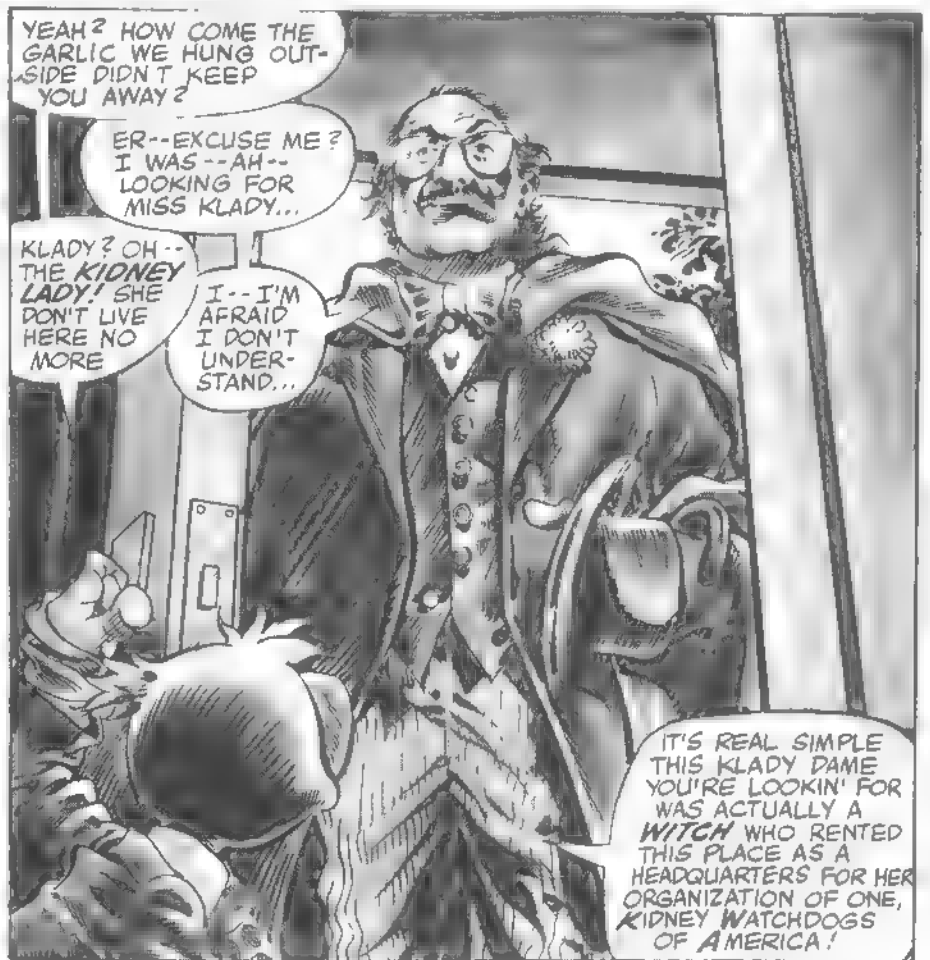
YEAH,



THE RINGMASTER CAUSED US ALL A LOT OF GRIEF, BUT IN PAUL'S CASE IT MAY BE PERMANENT.

BZZZ

ON THE OTHER HAND AS A SOMNAMBULANT HE'S SPARED HAVING TO ANSWER DOORBELLS.



YEAH? HOW COME THE GARLIC WE HUNG OUTSIDE DIDN'T KEEP YOU AWAY?

ER--EXCUSE ME? I WAS--AH--LOOKING FOR MISS KLADY...

KLADY? OH--THE KIDNEY LADY! SHE DON'T LIVE HERE NO MORE

I--I'M AFRAID I DON'T UNDERSTAND...

IT'S REAL SIMPLE THIS KLADY DAME YOU'RE LOOKIN' FOR WAS ACTUALLY A WITCH WHO RENTED THIS PLACE AS A HEADQUARTERS FOR HER ORGANIZATION OF ONE, KIDNEY WATCHDOGS OF AMERICA!

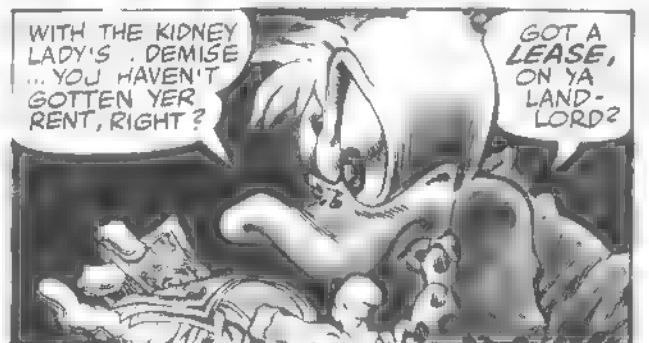


I--I SEE. I--YOU'RE A--A DUCK, AREN'T YOU?

YES, HE IS. WHO ARE YOU?

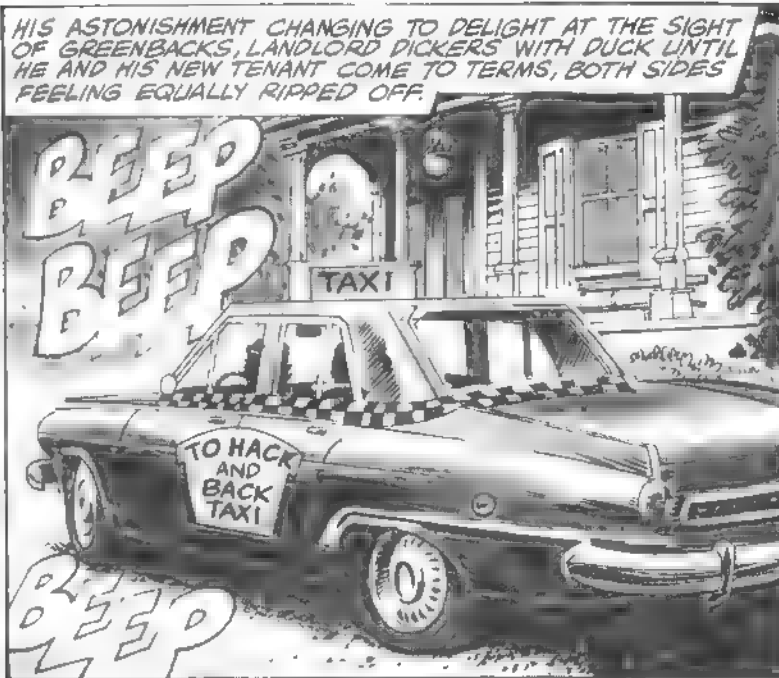
AH-HAH! NOW WE'RE GETTING DOWN TO IT!

ME? WHY I'M CYRUS DEGREE, THE LANDLORD!



WITH THE KIDNEY LADY'S DEMISE ... YOU HAVEN'T GOTTEN YER RENT, RIGHT?

GOT A LEASE, ON YA LAND-LORD?





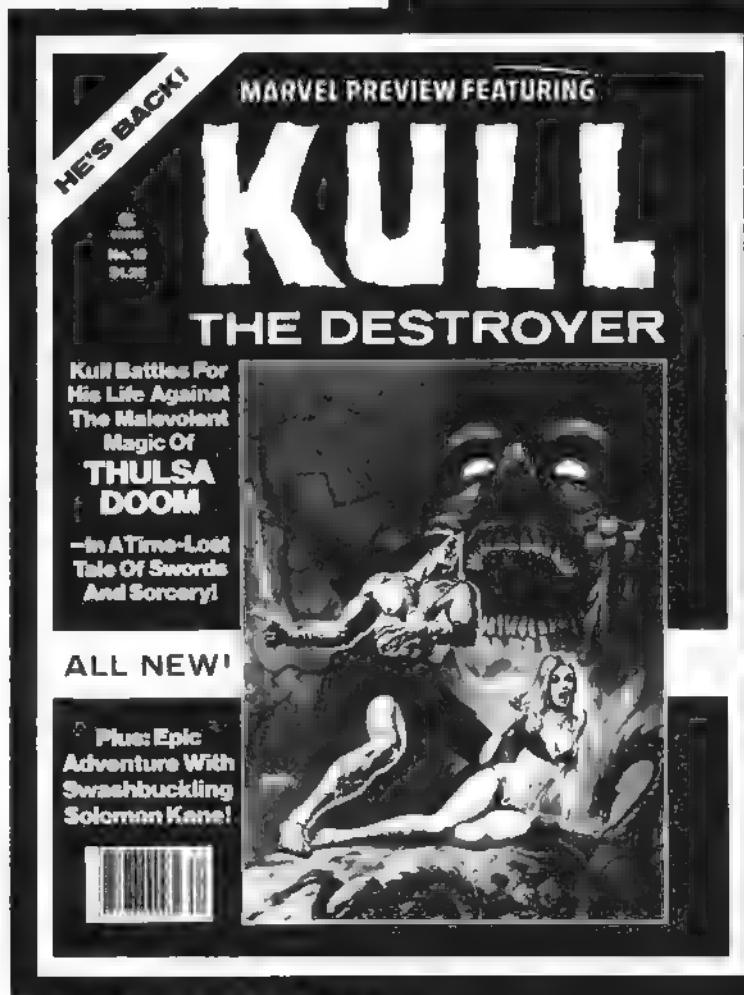
A SHORT TIME LATER, INHALING THE FRAGRANT BREEZES OFF LAKE ERIE AS THEY CRUISE ALONG EUCLID AVENUE, THE TRAVELERS REACH THEIR DESTINATION... DOWNTOWN CLEVELAND



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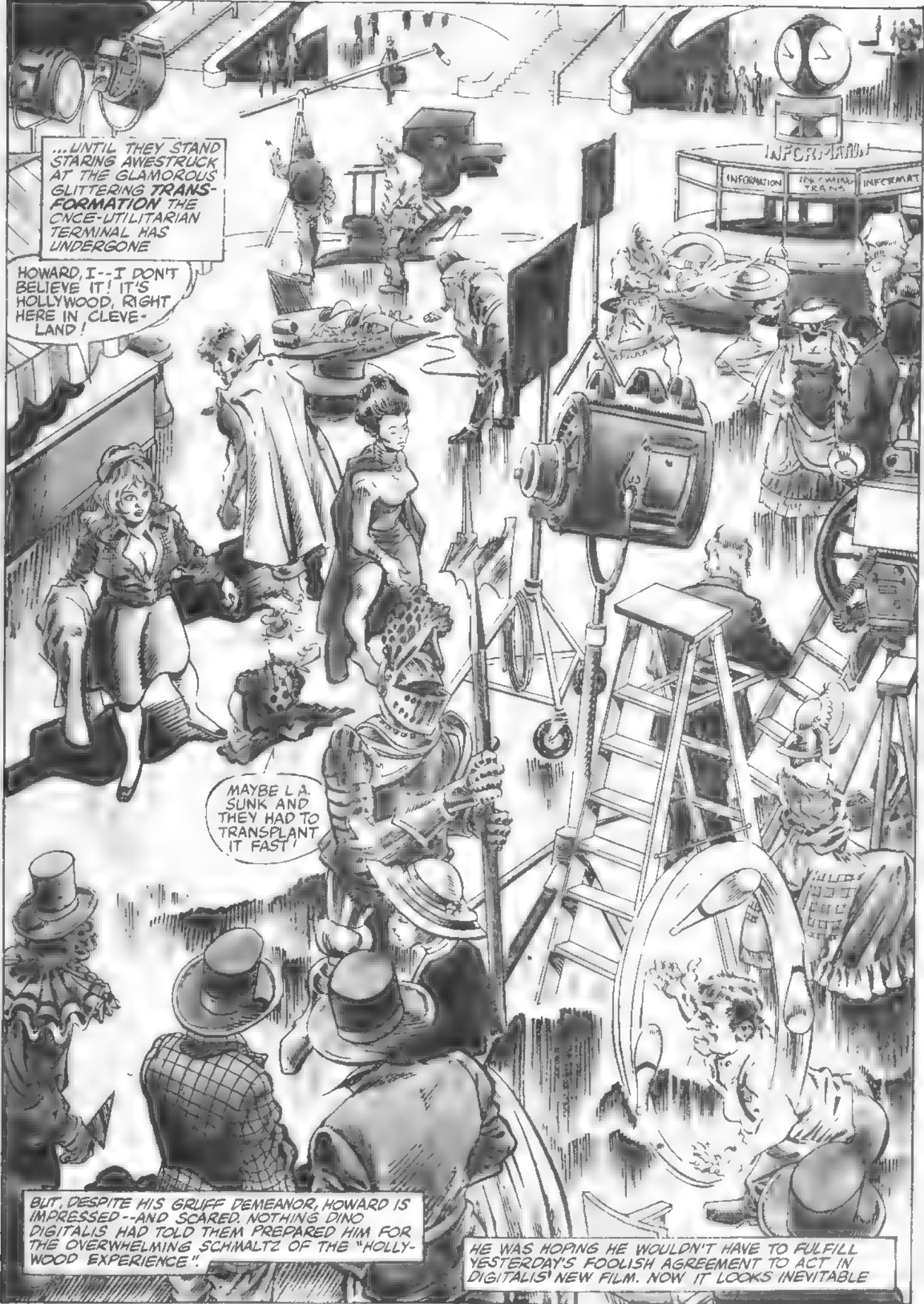
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IF YOU DIG
THE HARD-FIGHTING HEROES
OF ROBERT E. HOWARD—
DON'T MISS
MARVEL PREVIEW #19!



STORIES AND ART
BY ROY THOMAS,
SAL BUSCEMA,
TONY DEZUNIGA,
JOHN AND MARIE SEVERIN,
AND OTHER
BULLPEN GREATS!

'NUFF SAID? 'NUFF SAID!



...UNTIL THEY STAND STARING AWESTRUCK AT THE GLAMOROUS GLITTERING TRANSFORMATION THE ONCE-UTILITARIAN TERMINAL HAS UNDERGONE

HOWARD, I--I DON'T BELIEVE IT! IT'S HOLLYWOOD, RIGHT HERE IN CLEVELAND!

MAYBE L.A. SUNK AND THEY HAD TO TRANSPLANT IT FAST!

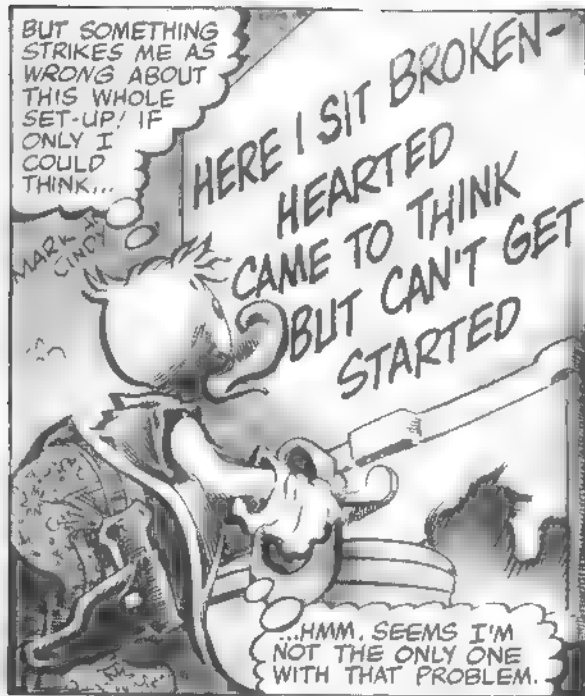
BUT, DESPITE HIS GRUFF DEMEANOR, HOWARD IS IMPRESSED--AND SCARED. NOTHING DINO DIGITALIS HAD TOLD THEM PREPARED HIM FOR THE OVERWHELMING SCHMALTZ OF THE "HOLLYWOOD EXPERIENCE".

HE WAS HOPING HE WOULDN'T HAVE TO FULFILL YESTERDAY'S FOOLISH AGREEMENT TO ACT IN DIGITALIS' NEW FILM. NOW IT LOOKS INEVITABLE









BUT SOMETHING STRIKES ME AS WRONG ABOUT THIS WHOLE SET-UP! IF ONLY I COULD THINK...

HERE I SIT BROKEN-HEARTED CAME TO THINK BUT CAN'T GET STARTED

...HMM, SEEMS I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE WITH THAT PROBLEM.



A PROBLEM NOT ENTIRELY WITHOUT CAUSE!

THE DUCK IS SHARP-- BUT A SIMPLE SPELL WILL DULL HIS THINKING!

HE MUST NOT SUSPECT UNTIL IT IS TOO LATE THAT THE NIGHTMARES HE HAS SUFFERED SINCE COMING TO CLEVELAND ARE MORE THAN DREAMS--



--JUST AS THIS MOVIE STUDIO IS LESS THAN REALITY! ALL ARE THE MYSTIC CREATIONS OF PRO RATA!

AND SINCE ALL WERE HIRED BY THE HOUR TO MAINTAIN THE ILLUSION OF REALITY UNTIL HOWARD COULD BE LURED INTO MY TRAP--



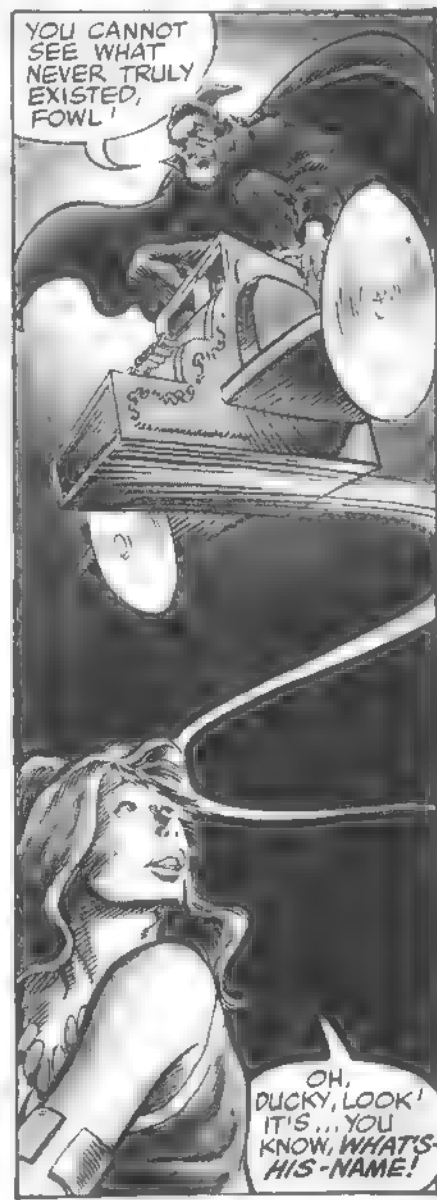
--CAST, CREW SETS, EVEN DINO DIGITALIS HIMSELF MUST BE RETURNED TO THE SAFETY DEPOSIT DIMENSION FROM WHICH THEY WERE BORROWED--

PEEF FET

--THAT I MAY INCURE NO UNNECESSARY EXPENSE UNTIL HOWARD THE DUCK HAS PROVIDED WHAT I DESIRE!



THE KEY TO THE COSMIC CALCULATOR THAT WILL MAKE ME CHIEF ACCOUNTANT OF THE UNIVERSE!







STUFF YOUR
ROCKETS AND
LET'S FIND
ANOTHER
EXIT!

THIS COSTUME
DOESN'T HAVE
ROCKETS,
DUCKY!

NOR WILL YOU FIND AN
EXIT UNBARRED TO YOU,
MS SWITZLER! I SUGGEST YOU
CEASE YOUR RUNNING AND TELL
ME WHAT I WISH TO HEAR!



SURE! WHY DIDN'T
YOU SAY SO? GO
AHEAD, DUCKY--
TELL HIM WHAT HE
WANTS TO HEAR!

AHHH, YOU'RE LOVELY WHEN YOU
SMILE--MAGIC IS ALIVE--WIZARDS
MAKE BETTER LOVERS--SORCERY
STOCKS CLOSED HIGH ON THE NEW
YORK EXCHANGE!!!



SILENCE,
FOWL! THAT
IS NOT THE
INFORMATION
I SEEK!

MAYBE I
PICKED THE
WRONG CATEGORY!
NEXT TIME I'LL
TRY "PRESIDENTS
OF THE U.S."!

HEAD FOR
COVER, TOOTS! IT'S
NOT REALLY RAINING
RAIN, Y'KNOW!

WHAT
CAN HE
WANT
FROM
US THIS
TIME,
HOWARD?

WANT, DEAR BEVERLY? WHY ALL I WANT IS THAT WHICH IS RIGHTFULLY MINE -- THE **JEWELLED KEY** TO THE **COSMIC CALCULATOR** THAT I MIGHT BECOME **CHIEF ACCOUNTANT** OF THE UNIVERSE!

SURELY YOU REMEMBER...

"...THE NIGHT YOU FIRST SET EYES UPON **HOWARD THE DUCK**!"

ONE LEAP OFF THIS NUTTY CREDIT CARD TOWER AN' THIS LIFE OF GRIEF WILL BE OVER!

"BUT PEERING WITHIN THE TOWER WINDOW HOWARD BEHELD A SIGHT WHICH ERASED SUICIDE FROM HIS MIND!"

Y-YOU'RE A **DUCK**!

SO YOU HAIRLESS APES KEEP REMINDING ME. WHAT'S WITH THE CHAINS, SWEET-HEART?

I'M THE PRISONER OF A MADMAN! YOU MUST SAVE ME!

GRRRRRR

WHAT THE HECK? AWRIGHT, LADY, READY OR NOT, HERE I...

...COME.

OH NO.

THE CEREMONIAL AXE. SEIZE IT. DEFEND YOURSELF.

"SEIZE IT", SHE SAYS! IT WEIGHS LUHHS A TON!

AN' IT'S STUCK IN THIS STUPID--

--STUMP!

SNNNNIT

DOORS!

CRASHH

THE DOG'S CHANGIN' INTO A HAIRLESS APE! SWELL! I COME HERE TO WIPE ME OUT--

--AND WIND UP A MURDERER!

HAVE NO FEAR, FEATHERED INTERLOPER! YOU'LL HAVE AMPLE OPPORTUNITY YET TO DIE!

WE-E-AULGH

"HAVING INADVERTANTLY SLAIN MY HIRED BARBARIAN, HOWARD LEFT NO CHOICE BUT TO RECRUIT HE HIMSELF AS A REPLACEMENT!"



DUCKY, WHY'S HE BLATHERING ON ABOUT FACTS WE ALL KNOW?

PLINK

LET HIM, BEV! IT'S ONLY THOSE WHO FORGET THE PAST WHO'RE DOOMED TO REPEAT IT!

"AH, BUT THERE IS NO NEED TO DISPATCH YOU AND THE LOVELY MS. SWITZLER AGAIN TO THAT OTHER DIMENSION WHEREIN LAY THE GEM KEY!"



WE-WE'RE FALLING!



CAN'T REFUTE YA THERE, TOOTS!

BUT IT LOOKS LIKE WE'VE LANDED-- IN SOME KINDA NEST!

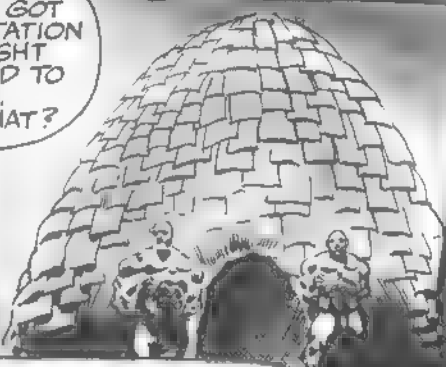


HOME WAS NEVER LIKE THIS, KIDDO! YOU OKAY?

UH-HUH... JUST SHOOK UP



WELL, WE GOT TRANSPORTATION OFF A KNIGHT WHO TRIED TO SLAY US. NOW WHAT?



WE HIE TO THE CITADEL OF SAI-FURR UP AHEAD! THAT'S WHERE PRO RATA SAYS THE GEM KEY IS KEPT!



WELL, HE WAS RIGHT.

OOOH...! WE HAVE TO REACH IT OR PRO RATA WILL ABANDON US HERE!

AWRIGHT, JUST LET ME THINK. NUTS, I WISH I HAD A CIGAR!



OH, I CAN HELP YOU WITH THAT LOOK IN YOUR SCABBARD, DUCKY.



I FOUND IT IN YOUR BREAST POCKET WHEN PRO RATA ORDERED ME TO-- ER-- CHANGE YOUR CLOTHES!

SAY NO MORE KID

MY LAST CIGAR!

NOW JUST LET ME COGITATE A SECOND OR TWO... I GOT IT!



YOU TAKE MY HELMET AND HOLD IT UNDER THE GEM KEY--

-- WHILE I TAKE STEADY AIM!



DUCKY, I'VE GOT IT! WE'RE HOME FREE!

IT COST ME A GOOD CIGAR, BUT IF IT'LL GET US OUT OF HERE...



UH-OH! WHEN WE PULLED OFF THIS LITTLE HEIST WE SET OFF THE BURGLER ALARM!

RUN, SWEET-HEART!

"BUT YOU WERE ACCOMPANIED IN YOUR FLIGHT FROM THAT OTHER DIMENSION BY THAT FIERCE **BAHND-BIRD**. WEREN'T YOU HOWARD?"

I'LL WORRY
LATER OVER WHETHER
I **BELIEVE** ANY OF
THIS!

NO! THIS WASN'T
MEANT TO HAPPEN! I
MUST'VE HIT THE
WRONG DECIMAL ON
THE COSMIC
CALCULATOR!

THE KEY! GIVE
ME THE GEM-
KEY! IT'S OUR
ONLY HOPE OF
CONTROLLING
THE BIRD!

WAAUUGHHH!

SURELY YOU REMEMBER
HOW THAT DAY ENDED?
THE ACCURSED **SPIDER-
MAN**, ARRIVING
UNINVITED--

I'M BEGINNING TO SENSE
WHERE THIS HISTORY LESSON
IS LEADING US, DUCKY!

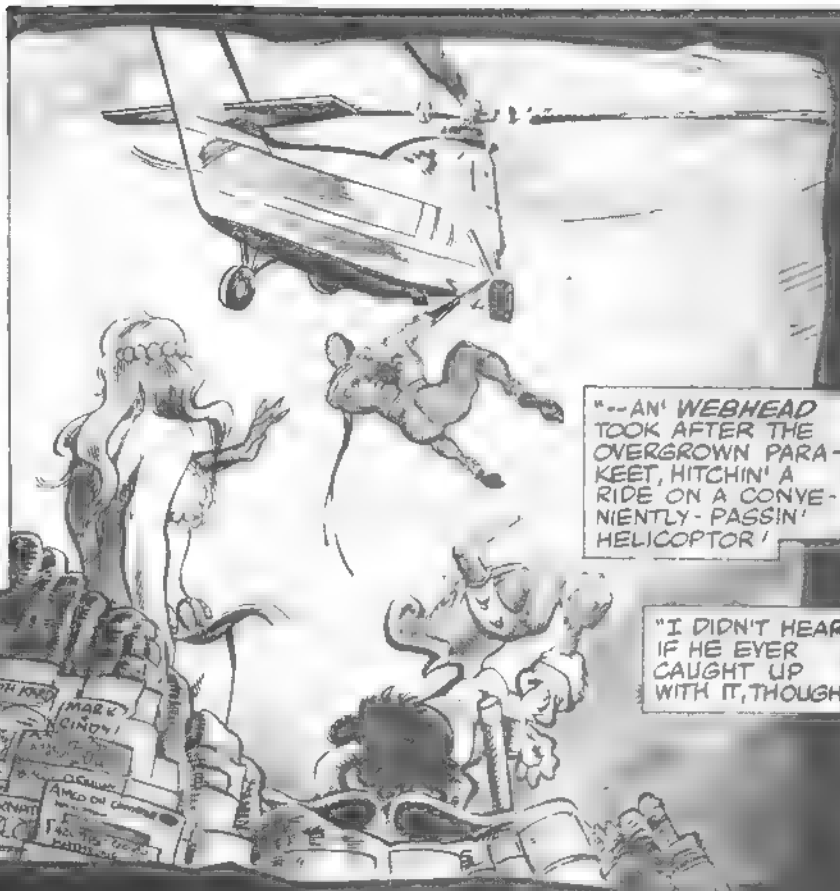
YEAH, ME
TOO, TOOTS!

--SNATCHED THE
GEM-KEY FROM
ME, WHILE YOU
KEPT ME FROM
SLAYING HIM--

AN' I DON'T LIKE THE IMPLICATIONS!
RATA AND THAT LEATHER-WINGED
OSTRICH TOTALLED THE CREDIT CARD
TOWER!

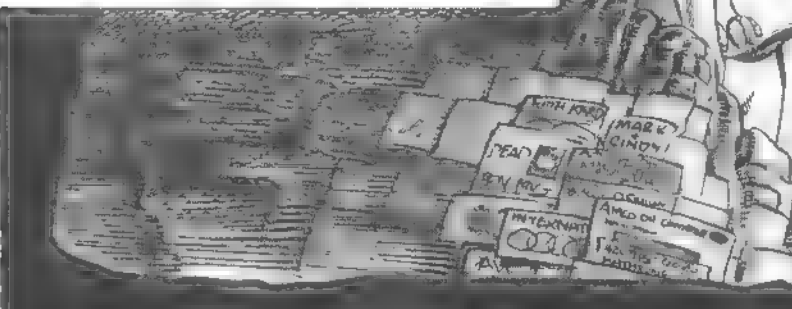


THE MAGICIAN
TOOK THE LONG
FALL TRYIN' TO
TOTAL ME...



"--AN' WEBHEAD
TOOK AFTER THE
OVERGROWN PARA-
KEET, HITCHIN' A
RIDE ON A CONVE-
NIENTLY-PASSIN'
HELICOPTOR!

"I DIDN'T HEAR
IF HE EVER
CAUGHT UP
WITH IT, THOUGH!



"BUT THAT STILL
LEFT BEV AN'
ME STRANDED
ATOP THE TOWER
RUINS--



"--UNTIL A FIRE-BOAT
OUTTA CLEVELAND
COME BY TO INVESTI-
GATE WHAT SET THE
CUYAHOGA RIVER
AFIRE!

...AN' WE'RE LEFT
WITH THIS HEKE
GEM KEY, TOOTS!



AN' BOTH OF
US PRACTICALLY
NAKED

I DON'T
MIND,
DUCKY!

*THE PRECEDING FLASHBACK
WAS BROUGHT TO YOU COURTESY
OF THE COLOR HOWARD THE
DUCK #1 COMIC --RICK.



NEEDLESS TO SAY, I
SURVIVED MY FIERY FALL
AND SET ABOUT REIN-
VESTING MY REMAINING
MYSTICAL MIGHT FOR
THE DAY WHEN I
WOULD HAVE YOU IN
MY POWER!

ONLY ONE
QUESTION
REMAINS
HOWARD. WHAT
HAPPENED TO
THE GEM
KEY!?!

LIKE I SAID
PRO-- BEV
AND I
NEEDED
CLOTHES
SO I--
ER...



"I HOCKED IT!

YOU WHA-
A-A-ATT?!!

YOU HOCKED THE
GEM KEY--THE
GREATEST FISCAL
FORCE IN THE
UNIVERSE?! FOR
MONEY? FOR
CLOTHES??

YOU...YOU...
YOU FOUL
LITTLE
FOWL!!

HOWARD,
DIDN'T YOUR
MOTHER EVER
TELL YOU THAT
HONESTY
ISN'T ALWAYS
THE BEST
POLICY?

YEAH, ALL
THE TIME. ONLY
I THOUGHT SHE
WAS LYING!







...WITH THE FEARSOME FISCAL-MINDED FOE!

SO! YOU HAVE FOUND AN ALLY IN THIS MYSTICAL OTHER-VERSE, HOWARD? I HAD NOT COUNTED ON THAT!

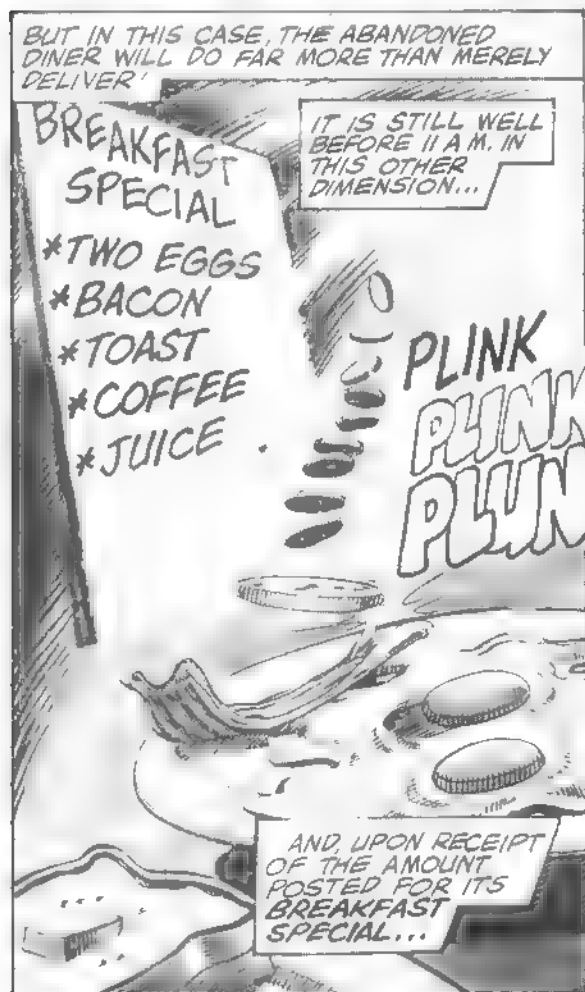


HOWEVER, NEITHER WAS I FOOLISH ENOUGH TO CONFRONT ONE I SUSPECTED OF HARBORING THE COSMIC GEM KEY ALONE!

PRO RATA'S HEX IS PASSING OVER US-- STRIKING THAT DINER WE SAW BACK AT UNION TERMINAL!

MAYBE HE'S PUTTING IN AN ORDER-TO-GO!

NO, THEY DON'T DELIVER



BUT IN THIS CASE, THE ABANDONED DINER WILL DO FAR MORE THAN MERELY DELIVER!

BREAKFAST SPECIAL

- *TWO EGGS
- *BACON
- *TOAST
- *COFFEE
- *JUICE

IT IS STILL WELL BEFORE 11 A.M. IN THIS OTHER DIMENSION...

PLINK
PLINK
PLUNK

AND, UPON RECEIPT OF THE AMOUNT POSTED FOR ITS BREAKFAST SPECIAL...



...THE DINER SERVES UP...
HORROR!

RISE, MY PRETTY PALATABLES! RISE!
RETURN TO LIFE FROM THE SKILLET,
TOASTERS, JUICERS AND PERCOLATORS
WHERE YOU EACH MET A GRISLY DEMISE!
RISE AND WREAK MY REVENGE UPON
HOWARD AND HIS BELOVED BEVERLY!

GNASH THEM! MASH THEM!
BLEND THEM! REND THEM!
SLICE, DICE, CHOP, PUREE!
LEAVE NO FEATHER INTACT,
NO HAIR UNSCORCHED!

UP SIZZLER,
UP TOAST, UP
COFFEE AND
QT! FOLLOW
EYECLOPS,
YOUR LEADER--

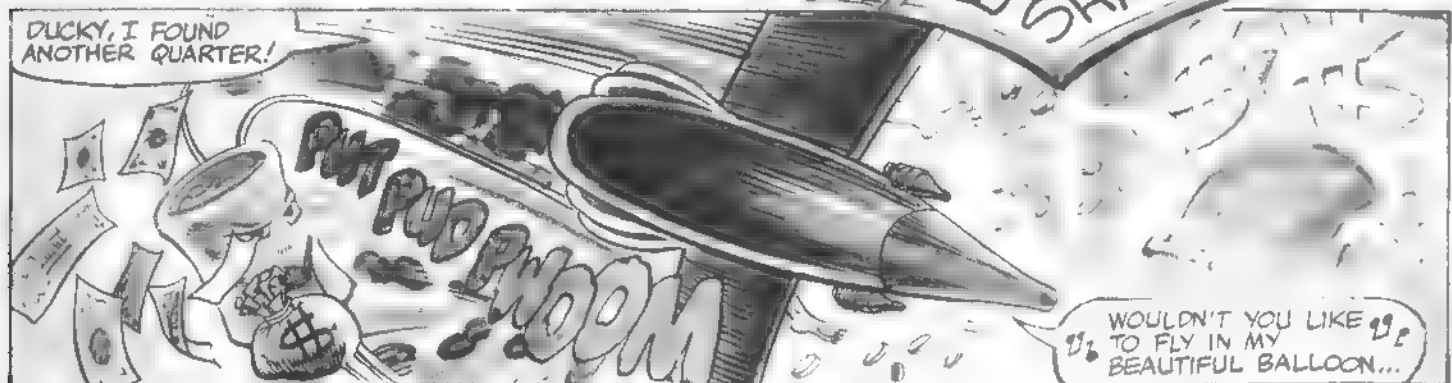
SLAY
HOWARD
TODAY!

BREAKFAST?
HE'S GONNA
MAKE US LOSE
OUR LUNCH BY
ATTACKING US
WITH
BREAKFAST
?!?

THAT'S
HITTING
ABOVE
THE
BELT!

LIKE IT OR NOT, DUCKY, IT LOOKS LIKE... WE HAVE
TO FIGHT THE

EGGS-MEN!











D-DUCKY, IT'S G-GETTING C-COLD UP HERE!

THAT'S THE IDEA, TOOTS! SEE? ICE!



YEAH, I SEE-- AND I FEEL! IS THIS YOUR WAY OF FIGHTING BACK?

BY COMMITTING SUICIDE AND DEPRIVING THE EGGS-MEN OF THE JOY OF KILLING US!



UNH-UNH, KIDDO! LISSSEN, IF WE'RE FREEZIN' UP HERE--

--IMAGINE WHAT THE COLD MUST BE DOIN' TO THE LIQUID DUO OF THE EGGS-MEN, COFFEE AND OJ!



I DON'T BELIEVE IT! DUCKY, YOU'RE A GENIUS! YOU'VE FREEZE-DRIED OUR FOES!

YEAH, BUT THAT STILL LEAVES EYECLOPS AN' THE SIZZLER! HOLD TIGHT TOOTS!





DUCKY, WE'RE
DOWN TO OUR
ABSOLUTE
LAST
QUARTER!

FEED
'ER IN,
BEV! LET'S
GET OUR
MONEY'S
WORTH



--BY GOIN'
AFTER THE
HEAD
HONCHO
HISSELF!

COME FOWL! FORWARD
TO FACE THE FINAL
ACCOUNTING!

THROUGH A SEARING SLEET OF
SINISTER SORCERY THE LITTLE
SPACESHIP BEARS HOWARD AND
BEV

ITS CLATTERING COIN-BOX OF
A HEART CLOSE TO BURSTING,
THE RICKETY ROCKET CHARGES
ON.



**RAT TAT
TAT**

I CAN!
I CAN!
I CAN!

...ANSWERING
SORCEROUS
SALVOS W TH
VOLLEY AFTER
VOLLEY!

RUMBLE CLANG



ATTAWAY
ROCKET!
KEEP GOIN'
WE'RE ALMOST
THERE!

YEAH! BUT HOW MUCH
LONGER? PRO RATA'S
SPELLS ARE STRIPPIN THE
ROCKET TO SCRAP METAL! ONLY ONE CHANCE...

I WILL!
I CAN!



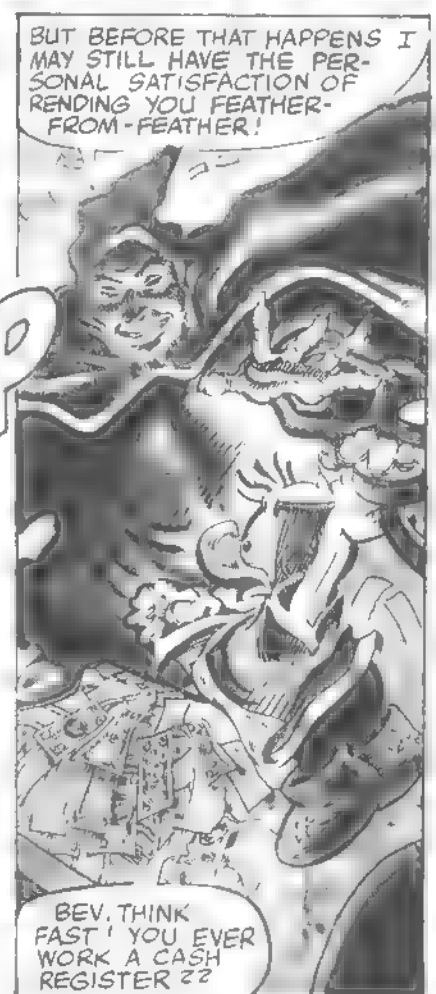
AND WITH A HEART-RENDING CRASH, THE LITTLE MOON ROCKET THAT COULD, SWAN DIVES SMACK INTO THE KEYBOARD OF PRO RATA'S FLYING CASH REGISTER!

...FOR ALL OF US!

EGAD!

I DID IT! I DID IT!

BIING



SURE, IN HIGBEE'S ONCE WHILE I WAS IN HIGH SCHOOL OH I SEE! YOU DON'T WANT MY AUTOBIOGRAPHY!



YOU WANT ME TO CLOSE THE CASH DRAWER!

N-NOOOOOO!
I-I'VE LOST MY FOOTING!



SWEET-HEART, I LOVE YA!

MY POWER, IT'S GONE--
REPOSSESSED! I CANNOT SAVE MYSELF!




BUT IF I AM TO PERISH,
THEN I WILL DRAG THIS
ENTIRE FISCAL OTHER-
VERSE DOWN WITH ME!

OBOY! THE WIZARD'S FALL IS CREATING A
SUCTION IN SPACE-- A VAST VORTEX! IT'S
LIKE SOMEONE PULLED THE PLUG ON
THE WHOLE WORKS...



CAUSIN' A
DEPRESSION ON A
COSMIC SCALE!



DUCKY, WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S HAPPENING??

IT'S THE BIG ONE, TOOTS, THE PANIC, THE COLLAPSE, THE WORKS!

BUT WHATEVER YA CALL IT, IT'S STILL...

**THE
CRASH
OF
'79!**



OMIGOSH! I USED TO HEAR MOMMY AND DADDY TALK ABOUT THE DEPRESSION! HOWARD, I- I DON'T THINK I CAN STAND POVERTY!

NAME ME TWO AVERAGE AFFLUENT AMERICANS BORN DURING THE FIFTIES THAT CAN BEV!



BUT THERE'S STILL A CHANCE! THE MOON ROCKET SAID EVERYTHING IN THIS NUTSO OTHER-VERSE WAS AN ILLUSION CREATED BY PRO RATA!

YET WE'RE CLINGING TO THE ILLUSION EVEN AS IT SLIPS DOWN INTO RECESSION!



WE GOTTA ACT, TOOTS! GIVE UP OUR HOLDINGS, TAKE THE PLUNGE NOW BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE! C'MON, BEV! AFTER ME! ONE-- TWO-- THREE...

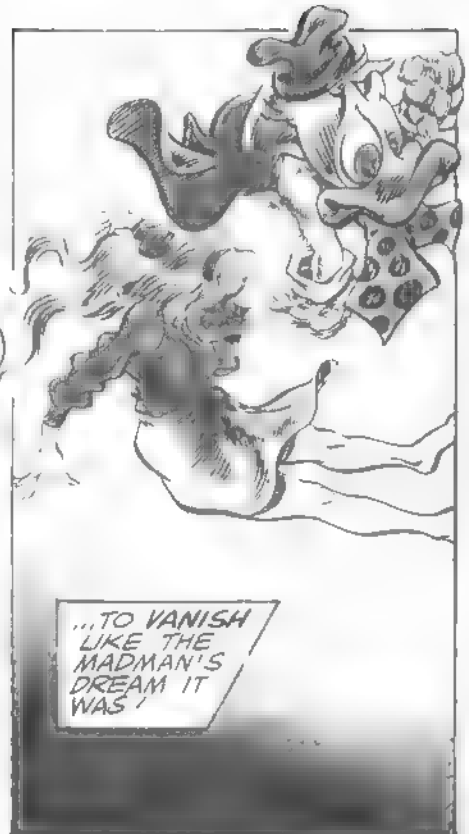
--DIVEST!

FEAR PLUCKING AT THEIR HEARTSTRINGS, HOWARD AND BEVERLY LEAP INTO UNCERTAINTY...

... WHILE ALL AROUND THEM, PRO
RATA'S FINANCIAL COSMOS
CONTINUES TO CRUMBLE...



...TO
COLLAPSE...



...TO VANISH
LIKE THE
MADMAN'S
DREAM IT
WAS!





AW, BUT WHAT THE
HECK! YOU'RE
RIGHT, KIDDO--
WE ARE HOME!

HOME AN'
DECKED OUT IN
THE HABERDASHERY
TO WHICH WE'RE
ACCUSTOMED!



HOME, AND THROUGH
WITH ACTING AND
SHOOTING FOR THE
BRIGHT LIGHTS!
Y'KNOW, DUCKY,
MODELLING ISN'T
ALL THAT BAD!

DRAFTY
BUT NOT
BAD.



AND YOU WANT TO KNOW
SOMETHING ELSE, MY SEXY
LITTLE BALL OF FEATHERS?
I LOVE YOU!

IN THE WORDS
OF THE BARD,
TOOTS: "THE
FEELING'S
MUTUAL!"

THE
END

Wise Quacks

Welcome to this, the first installment of *Wise-Quacks* to appear in the all-new **HOWARD THE DUCK MAGAZINE!**

Needless to say, while our new format provides us greater room for experimentation with everyone's favorite fowl, likewise this column provides you—our readers—with a forum in which to air your views. Every issue we'll seek to publish the most thought-provoking (or merely madcap) missives concerned with Howard (or life in general). This page is thus thrown wide open to you, to do with as you wish—be it to comment, to complain, to quibble, to quip, to praise, to pan, or just to air your dirty laundry (but not too dirty; this is, after all, a family magazine!). In return, we pledge to actually sit down and read whatever insanity you send our way. How's that for evenhandedness?

Oh, before we forget, this first column will deal with those letters regarding the last two issues (HTD #30 & 31) of the late-lamented **HOWARD THE DUCK** color comic. Next ish we hope to run your reactions to our **HOWARD THE DUCK MAGAZINE #1!**

WAAUGH!!

Dear Bill, Gene and Jim,

The departure of Steve Gerber was a sudden shock to me, and one that filled me with all kinds of dread and apprehension. This series had reached such high levels of artistic success, and its characters had become so real and special...well, it seemed to me a new writer was bound to shake that up a bit.

Credit must go to you, Bill, for making the transition as painless as possible. The last two issues of the **HOWARD THE DUCK** color comic have shown that you already know Howard pretty well, and that you have an appropriately weird sense of humor. But they also foreshadowed a couple of things that are going to disturb me if they aren't taken care of.

First off, there's the little matter of Howard and Beverly. It was becoming more and more obvious to me that Gerber was intending to

either break them up for good, or else to develop a serious rift in their relationship. This crushed me but, like Howard, I grew to accept it. After all, their life together has always been a little rocky, and all things must pass. Sorry, Bill, but I just don't accept or believe that their relationship could ever be the same after the events in HTD #31. Your sudden solution to the problem in HTD #31 was perhaps the worst part of your debut. It was almost as if you were playing a stage manager who, knowing full well that the theater is on fire, nevertheless goes on stage all smiles to tell the audience that everything is peachy-keen. See what I mean? If you really felt that you *had* to do something about the fire (How & Bev's relationship) you could have gradually PUT IT OUT instead of just ignoring it with your little dose of sugar-and-spice.

One of the great things about the humor in this series has been that it has always arisen from the characters or the situations; rarely, if ever, has it been laid over then or shoved down their throats. You did very well at this in your first two times at bat, with only one major exception: your decision to have Dr. Bong's speeches consist almost entirely of bad one-liners. Lines like: "What light from yonder finger breaks?" were just pitiful. Come on, Bill. Howard deserves better than ha-ha lines, and so do we readers. Dr. Bong was perhaps the most formidable enemy Howard has ever faced (excepting, of course, society itself) and you turned him into a clown.

Now, admittedly, I'm a Gerber "fan" and so I'm prejudiced. So, just for the record, I have to admit that the sight of five little Bongs running around was enough to crack up the Great Stoneface that I was determined to maintain throughout the entire reading. That gag was funny in a blatant, visual, gut-level way. However, the element that was really much funnier (and also more intrinsic to the series) was the bit in which Howard managed to escape the battle in the hospital corridor, only

to have the springs in his armored shoes bounce him right back up to the very place he's escaped from. Excellent!

I'm also very glad that you've not gone the route of Marv Wolfman and the HTD newspaper strip by turning Howard into a gag-strip...at least, you haven't *completely*! Iron Duck was the sort of silly situation I thought had ended when Howard became possessed of (by) the Son of Satan. Not too many of *those* sort of plots, please. They're too easy, too much of a crutch to use in place of real humor.

I am looking forward to the new **HOWARD THE DUCK MAGAZINE**, even in black-and-white. It will hopefully mean that the more saccharine elements of the past few issues of HTD will be replaced by more sophisticated humor, conflict and comment that Howard became known for. If you can't do it, Bill, nobody can.

I don't feel that I can say anything about the artwork that everybody doesn't already know. Gene Colan is Howard! I'd heard rumors that he was going to be leaving the series, and I'm glad that isn't true.

Douglas Thornsjo
Bessey Ridge Road
Albion, ME 04910

Bill,

HTD #31 was a success, and you've passed through your first challenge, finishing off unfinished business (although I hope you're really *not* going to spend all your time plugging unplugged holes in the Gerber continuity!) and clearing the boards for the Bill Mantlo version.

One thing missing, vitally important to the character, was Howard's anger. He's not negative, he's angry! He really should not have faced a trip to the valley of death with such passivity. His anger is an element that should really be stressed in the future. Angry is as close to caring as Howard can get, and I'd like to see him develop as a more effectual person. (I imagine you read the Neal Adams interview in *The Comics' Journal* which was really on-target about a lot of this mag's faults. Under Gerber, HTD really was a cry-baby book. Howard the Duck on the edge of despair. Story after story where he's ground down by this vast vegematic we call life, and then put sadistically back together again and made to suffer more. Howard has wallowed in self-indulgent despair and negativity and callow unconcern long enough! The character has vast potential for continued growth, and the last few Gerber issues left the door open for just such an evolution. I hope you pick up on it).

Part of me, however, was very disappointed that Howard didn't rip Dr. Bong apart, that Bong didn't melt like the Wicked Witch of the West when he reached a certain pitch; that he wasn't impaled on a stake; etc. The other part of me appreciated the non-Marvelese, nonviolent ending, and of course the possibility of Bong's return, with siblings.

And you didn't mention it, but I assume a marriage by a Russian fishing-trawler Captain (performed under duress, yet) isn't valid in the USA. So everything is tied up, except Gerber never did tell us the second part of Dr. Bong's origin. It would make a nice feature for the HTD magazine, like a parody of the much-reprinted "Origin of Dr. Doom" from the famous **FANTASTIC FOUR ANNUAL #2**.

Anyway, I'm fascinated to see what you'll do in a more mature format, and what a Michael Golden duck looks like. I would avoid bringing back too many of Gerber's characters and concentrate on creating your own. Good luck.

Steven Alan Bennett
687 Merton Avenue
Akron, OH 44306

By now, Steve, you'll have seen Bill's villains versus our fowl. So what do you think of Jackpot—the One-Armed Bandit, Mr. Chicken, Chair-Thing and this issue's Eggs-Men?

As for Howard's passivity in the face of certain death, Bill intends to bring out some of the more mellow, thoughtful sides of Howard's character. You rightly pointed out that Howard seemed only able to relate through anger. Bill's feeling is that anger—while a vital part of any characterization—is limiting and, in the end, self-destructive, leading to exactly those crybaby elements you and Neal noted in the strip. So, in rounding out Howard's character, Bill felt a touch of passivity was needed at just that moment. But, as we promised to be totally honest in this column, Bill has asked for one line or two to get something off his chest. Here it is. Readers please note:

"I AM NOT STEVE GERBER!"

Thank you, Bill. There you have yet another indication of the uses of anger as therapy.

That about raps up this month's free-associations. Please take all those round holes out of your square pegs as you file from the room. Class will resume in sixty days sharp. Please be prompt.

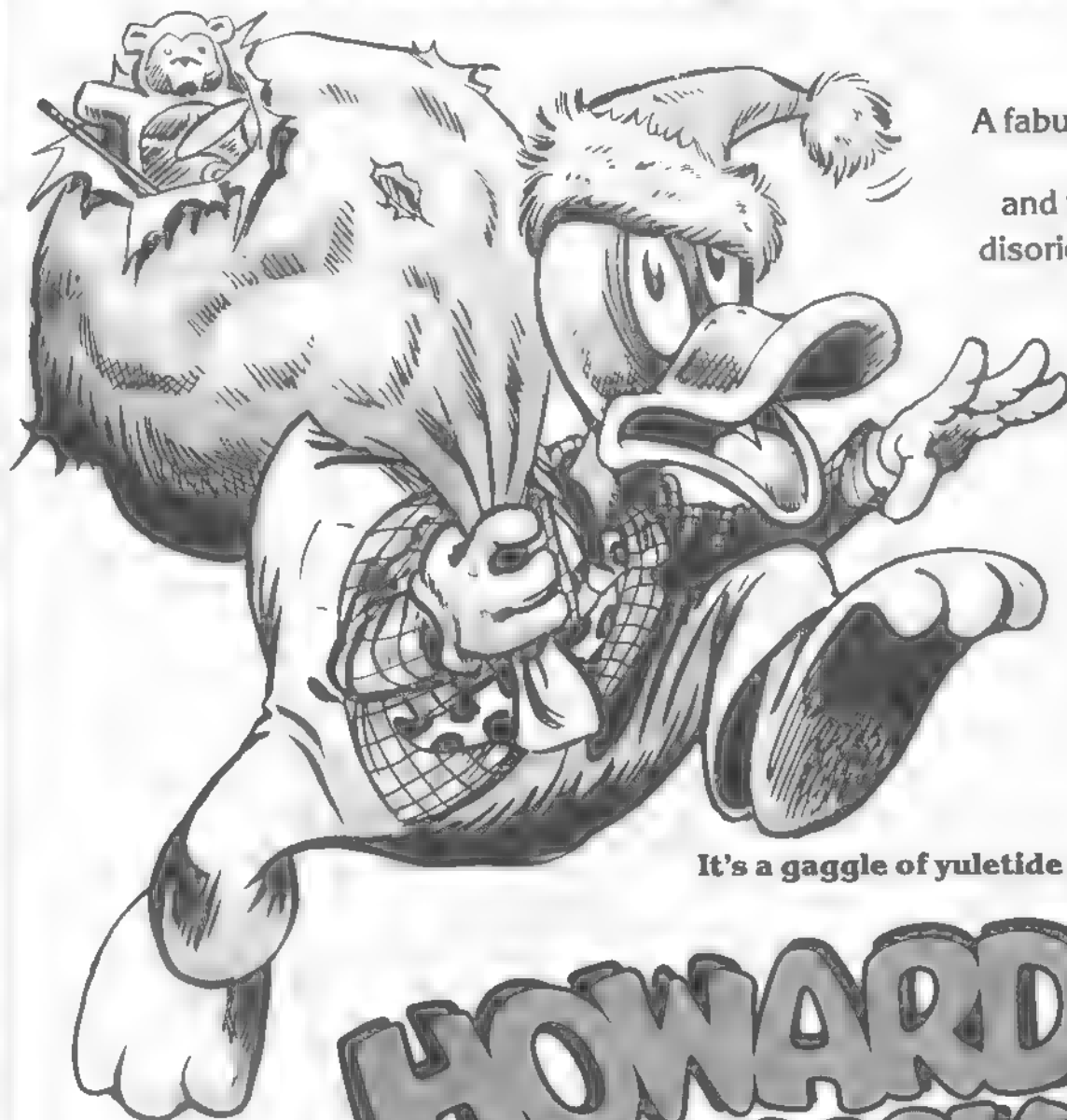
Howard doesn't like to be kept waiting. Homework should be sent to:

Wise Quacks
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Tis the season to be jolly with
an Xmas extravaganza direct from Cleveland!

"A Christmas for Carol"



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on the life
and times of our
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HOWARD the DUCK?

#3

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